

## **Melbourn Parish Council September 2020 – County and District Councillors’ Report**

### **Covid-19 testing for school staff and the general public: capacity falls short**

It was not long after schools reopened that the unavailability of Covid-19 testing for staff became a live issue locally. We’ve asked about the potential for dedicated and accessible testing arrangements for school staff, in order to prevent unnecessary and long staff absences due to self-isolation requirements when someone in the household develops any symptoms. It’s clear that a significant gap in capacity in Covid test labs means the system simply can’t meet demand. This is why it has been so difficult to secure a local test appointment, let alone create bespoke school testing arrangements. People are being urged not to seek a test unless they are required to do so, in order to protect limited capacity for those who are required to have a test and need it most.

### **Public Health Intelligence team: Covid-19 updates**

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Public Health Intelligence team produces frequent detailed updates on Covid-19 cases and settings. You can find these the reports here:

[https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus\\_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/](https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/)

A concerning rise in cases among young adults in the 18-30 age group has been logged in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and while hospital admissions and deaths have been low, there is concern about transmission to the wider population.

### **One-way streets in Melbourn**

During works in Mortlock Street over the summer, several key residential streets including Norgetts Lane, Little Lane, Meeting Lane and Water Lane saw a concerning rise in driving in or out contrary to restricted access regulations, presumably as drivers looked for village cut-throughs. A number of helpful suggestions from residents have been given to the Local Highways Officer, and we hope to report back on remedial action in the near future.

### **Poor broadband speeds on the edge of the village? Government funded top-up vouchers**

The Cambridgeshire County Council Connecting Cambridgeshire team has launched a top-up scheme for rural gigabit vouchers – topping up the voucher value for those on the slowest speeds. Please, if you experience slow broadband speeds and live at the edge of the village, check this out:

<https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/2020/09/gigabit-broadband-voucher-scheme-to-be-topped-up/>

### **Government consultation on pavement parking**

As part of its suite of measures to encourage active travel, the government is consulting on significant restrictions on pavement parking.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking/pavement-parking-options-for-change>

### **Bus services and Addenbrooke’s**

No doubt those who use the Stagecoach service are aware of fundamental changes that came into force on August 30, with the 'Busway A' service between Royston and Cambridge replaced by the 915. The new service runs between Royston and Drummer Street Station Cambridge, including stops at Melbourn High St car park, Shepreth near Dunsbridge Turnpike, Foxton Station Road and Trumpington Park and Ride for a short wait for anyone wishing to change to the 'Busway A' service from there to Addenbrooke's. This means that the journey to Addenbrooke's is now broken into two. The reason for the change – which has been replicated throughout Cambridgeshire – is the effects of the Covid pandemic upon public transport, both in terms of reduced users and revenue, and a reduced workforce. Stagecoach have told us they are looking at this as a temporary alteration and hope to build back.

Meanwhile, for those bus passengers disembarking at Addenbrooke's, the Outpatients bus stop had been moved in order to accommodate an enlarged ambulance access to the Emergency Department. The good news is that the bus stop will be restored imminently.

### **New triage pilot at Addenbrooke's**

There is now a new pilot triage system at Addenbrooke's Hospital launched to help make sure patients get the right care in the right place. From 9am to 9pm, anybody who attends Emergency Department (ED) without a referral from a medical professional, who hasn't been brought in by an ambulance, or hasn't called NHS 111 in advance will be reviewed by a senior clinician.

They will assess the patient's symptoms and decide whether emergency is the most appropriate place for their issue. If the patient does not require care from the ED, they will be directed to call NHS 111 or to visit their GP or a local pharmacy.

This pilot supports the new national NHS 111 First initiative that encourages people to contact NHS 111 before going to an Emergency Department in order to ensure they get the right help at the right time.

### **Business recovery**

South Cambs District Council has distributed over £25 million of government grants to businesses. The flow of money has now stopped but the Council now has appointed a team of four experts whose job it is to support local businesses in any way they wish - help with a planning application or a trading license or advice on business recovery and diversification and so on. The aim is to create a One Stop Shop at the council for all businesses regardless of size, and to give all business owners a single point of contact in terms of a real person with whom they can communicate. If you are a local business, please do sign up for the newsletter which contains updates on just about everything you could ever want to know as a business owner in South Cambs. Lots of information is available:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/>

### **Planning**

The Government has published a White Paper on Planning Reform that is causing some consternation amongst planning authorities. Although there are some serious issues with current legislation, and things could be made slicker and better from the customer point of view, generally Councils do a good job of protecting the places that need to be protected including the Green Belts, Conservation Areas, Heritage Assets and rural areas. The Government blames local authorities for

restricting the speed of housing delivery, but in fact this is caused by developers who will only build houses as fast as they can sell them.

The new proposal is that areas will be designated for 'growth' and that very few application processes will need to be got through for building to commence. Councils such as South Cambs are gravely concerned that ensuring housing is built to high standards and is located close to jobs and facilities will be stopped, and the planning system reduced to a random race to the bottom. There is a wide-ranging consultation underway and we expect that the final legislation will look quite different from what is currently proposed - at least we hope it will.

### **'Call for Sites' & the new Local Plan**

The "Call for Sites" is the first stage in the statutory process of creating a Local Plan - a responsibility of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The process must be transparent and needs to identify as many potential opportunities as possible. Around 600 sites of varying sizes have been submitted by landowners across South Cambridgeshire in response to the Call for Sites. These have not yet been assessed or filtered in any way, and therefore have **no planning status**. It is a list of potential sites that may be used in the plan-making process, after the council has decided on what spatial strategy to use. This is the same process followed in making the current Local Plan.

Following on from feedback received from the public during the Issues & Options First Conversation, there will now be a process of working out which of the spatial strategies will be selected for providing jobs and homes that are affordable for people in the district, whilst meeting our zero carbon and sustainable living objectives. Just as in the previous plan, where only a small number of submitted sites were selected - less than 10% - the district council envisages that only a very small number of sites on this list will be used in the plan.

There will be further consultations with the public later in the process, to present and discuss the preferred spatial options. Until then, **none** of these sites has any planning status.

Lots of background and information here:

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/first-conversation-consultation-and-call-for-sites/>

### **Cambridgeshire County Council's mobile libraries resume**

The mobile library fleet is running again, with two new vehicles. The service returned on September 21 to its regular stops, but unfortunately access to the vehicle is limited to help keep staff safe, so customers will need to choose books in advance. To do so:

Please use the usual reservation service: <https://cambridgeshire.spydus.co.uk>

The new Select and Collect service allows you to request a collection of books based on your tastes:

[https://cambridgeshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Select\\_and\\_Collect](https://cambridgeshire-self.achieveservice.com/service/Select_and_Collect)

Or by telephone on 0345 045 5225

Choose the mobile library as a pick up point, and order as far in advance as possible to ensure a selection is ready and issued for you to pick up from your stop – ideally a week in advance, but the service will do its best with forms received after this.

If you have any queries, email the team: [MobileLibraries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:MobileLibraries@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### **Home-Start**

Home-Start has been working very hard to support local children and families facing a particularly difficult stretch these past few months.

They've had to adapt their services to virtual and telephone platforms but, taking stock, feel they've been able to make a fundamental difference – indeed their service is often described as a lifeline service. They rely on donations and grants to make their service possible. Thanks for all the support that has been directed their way. To find out more including how you can help, please visit

<https://www.hsrsc.org.uk/> or ring 01763 262 262.

### **Clean stuff only in the blue bin please!**

South Cambs District Council is asking us to make sure that yogurt pots, tin cans, tomato sauce dispensers, fast food trays and anything else going in the blue bin are clean, to avoid contamination of items that can be recycled. For a list of what goes in which bin:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bins/what-goes-in-which-bin/>